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SUBJECT: UN OFFICE IN BELGRADE FEARS NATO WILL BE MIA IN
NORTHERN KOSOVO

Classified By: Ambassador Alejandro Wolff, Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (C) Summary: In a March 12 meeting with Ambassador Wolff, the UN Office in Belgrade's Acting Director Richard Wilcox said that Belgrade believes it will control northern Kosovo and is looking for a deal with the EU on Serb enclaves in the rest of Kosovo. Ambassador Wolff responded that Belgrade is playing with dangerous assumptions in thinking the West will give up on northern Kosovo. Wilcox said all must recognize that the EU is the key player, not the UN and that he wants to facilitate EU talks with Belgrade. He also said that UNMIK fears KFOR will not be supportive if UNMIK takes a more assertive role in northern Kosovo. End Summary.

12. (C) Ambassador Wolff asked for Wilcox's assessment of the domestic political situation in Belgrade in the run-up to the May elections. Wilcox said he believed undecideds make up only a few percentage points in overall public opinion, so we will likely see the same coalition after May elections as now. He said whether DS or DSS gains additional percentage points could effect Kosovo policy at the margin, such as willingness to work with the EU. Wilcox said Belgrade believes it will control the north even if no deal is cut with the EU, thus it is really eyeing a deal on Serb enclaves south of the Ibar. He said Samardzic's view is that Belgrade wants "more than the Ahtisaari plan provided for Serb enclaves." Wilcox continued that some in Belgrade would be willing to allow Kosovo participation in international organizations in exchange for this expanded role in enclaves.

13. (C) Ambassador Wolff responded that Belgrade is playing with dangerous assumptions in thinking the West will give up on northern Kosovo. In fact, he said, the manifestations of Serb, Kosovar and UNMIK interpretations on important issues such as customs and borders will play out on the ground in the north, not in the enclaves. Wilcox said Belgrade's policy is to assert itself as much as possible on parallel arrangements short of security arrangements that would violate The Military Technical Agreement. He said Belgrade will respond to arguments that it is violating 1244 by saying Kosovo's DI already violated it.

14. (C) Ambassador Wolff asked Wilcox what he says to Belgrade officials, in particular regarding northern Kosovo. Wilcox responded that on customs he says that Kosovo is one area and emphasizes the UN wants an agreement on restoring customs. Wilcox said he does not mention force as an option if Belgrade were to not agree and Belgrade never issues any challenges, only saying that it wants to reach an agreement. Wilcox believed two upcoming "flashpoints" will be Belgrade's

May elections and the passage of Kosovo's constitution in June that will force clarity from the UN. Wilcox said Belgrade assumes the international community will not try to forcibly reintegrate the north. Ambassador Wolff noted that Serbian FM Jeremic seemed more realistic about the dangers during a recent encounter in the UN dining room. Wolff said Jeremic emphasized at that time that after the May elections DS would accept a facade where Serbia can treat Kosovo in the same manner in which Argentina treats the Falklands. Wilcox agreed Serbian President Boris Tadic talks about "contested sovereignty" but wants a practical relationship with the EU missions in Kosovo.

15. (C) Wolff asked Wilcox for his short and long term views on the right way to deal with problems in northern Kosovo. Wilcox stressed that all must recognize that the EU is the key player, not the UN, and hoped for instructions from UN headquarters that would allow facilitating the EU talking more with Belgrade because "the UN's role will eventually cease in any meaningful way." He also said that UNMIK fears that KFOR will not be there to support it if it does take a more assertive role in the north in the near term. Wilcox complained strongly that KFOR will not commit prior to receiving its own instructions on how it might react to an urgent UNMIK request.
KHALILZAD